



## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2009-2010 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2004.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: (per district designation)
- |           |                                   |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 7         | Elementary schools (includes K-8) |
| 2         | Middle/Junior high schools        |
| 1         | High schools                      |
|           | K-12 schools                      |
| <b>10</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>                      |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 9072

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city  
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☐ Suburban  
☒ Small city or town in a rural area  
☐ Rural

4. 19 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	6	68	58	126
K			0	7	73	63	136
1			0	8	78	78	156
2			0	9			0
3			0	10			0
4			0	11			0
5			0	12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							418

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:      2 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
    2 % Asian  
    4 % Black or African American  
    2 % Hispanic or Latino  
    0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
    90 % White  
               % Two or more races  
    **100 % Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 15 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	35
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	27
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	62
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	427
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.145
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	14.520

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 1 %

Total number limited English proficient 4

Number of languages represented: 4

Specify languages:

Chinese, Georgian, Niger, Shona

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 67 %

Total number students who qualify: 279

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 19 %

Total Number of Students Served: 81

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>9</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>17</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>24</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>18</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>25</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>40</u>	<u>0</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 16 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	95%	92%	92%	92%	92%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	93%	94%	97%	95%
Teacher turnover rate	3%	3%	0%	0%	3%
Student dropout rate	%	%	%	%	%

Please provide all explanations below.

Daily Teacher Attendance: In addition to traditional teacher absences provided for through the labor agreement, teacher attendance rates also include absences for grade level and school-based curriculum development.

Student Attendance: Regular and consistent student school attendance remains a priority and an expectation among our school community. An active attendance team comprised of a social worker, school nurse, guidance counselor, and administrator work closely with students and families to mitigate challenges common to mobile SES populations. And, a recently revised process to respond to students who are at risk of truancy or who are truant seeks to strengthen student engagement.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

Graduating class size	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0	%
Enrolled in a community college	0	%
Enrolled in vocational training	0	%
Found employment	0	%
Military service	0	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
<b>Total</b>		%

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Stroll the corridors of the James F. Doughty Middle School and you will notice that every student carries a laptop issued through the Maine Learning and Technology Initiative. What you may not notice is that nearly every student carries a library book as well. In fact, over the past five years, circulation increased in our media center, and discussions about books take place regularly in our classrooms and during our popular book clubs. Today, a culture of literacy permeates our school as evidenced by the banner stenciled above the doorway of the Media Center-- We are a school of readers. This has not always been the case, nor what you might expect from a socio-economically diverse school in which 67 percent of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Bangor, a community of 34,000, serves as a regional retail, medical, and governmental service center for eastern and northern Maine as well as a hub for travelers to and from the Canadian Maritimes. The region is buoyed by employment opportunities at Eastern Maine Medical Center and the nearby flagship campus of the University of Maine. The James F. Doughty School, with 450 students in grades 6, 7 and 8, one of two middle schools in the community, educates an economically diverse population. On the land of the once-thriving Dow Air Force Base now sits Bangor International Airport, and the former base multi-family housing units have served as low-income rental property-- and as home to a significant portion of James F. Doughty students-- since the base closure in the late 1960's.

The Bangor School Department expects to equip all its students academically for the demands of 21st century living. At the time No Child Left Behind was adopted, an historical look reveals that our school was rooted in a 20th Century model of education: teacher-centered, textbook-based, and content-driven. We were not yet in the habit of expecting more from our students, perhaps having accepted the mistaken belief that their demographics excused low performance. Through the gradual internalization of the belief that demographics do not determine destiny, curriculum now invigorates students and teachers, instruction models best practice, and expectations for student performance have risen to new levels.

The first catalyst for change was the Bangor School Department's bold vision for the 21st century established in its publication of *Beyond 2000: A Plan for Educational Improvement in the Next Decade*. The document acknowledged both the challenges of a global future and the need for a new level of commitment to our students. Approached academically, this led to a conscious decision at JFD to hire teachers who both were highly trained in their content areas and who were thoughtful, curious practitioners-- paving the way for spirited professional discussions on improving instructional practice and raising student achievement. Approached from a whole-child perspective, the document reinforced the school's commitment to fostering positive connections to school through varied, purposeful co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

Armed with several years of assessment data, as well as state and national standards, and led by a forward-thinking, collaborative principal, a committee of teachers across disciplines came together to develop goals and an action plan for improving student achievement across the curriculum. We began by sharing what we knew from our classroom experiences, professional reading, and professional training. From these discussions we identified reading and math instruction as primary targets of our school improvement plan. In retrospect, it was our first professional learning community, drawing upon the talent and commitment of individuals and coinciding with a district's efforts to institutionalize continuous school improvement through reflective practice.

Several initiatives were the result of this early exercise including extended reading and math classes for most students, an emphasis on the explicit teaching of reading strategies in ELA classes, a Sustained Silent Reading program, a commitment to provide on-going professional support and development (as evidenced by the dozens of volumes now housed in the professional reading section of the Media Center), and a plan to provide

students with strategies for success on standardized assessments. Most importantly, however, the school wholeheartedly embraced the belief that reading instruction and an emphasis on literacy and higher-order thinking must anchor instruction at all grade levels and in all content areas. This recognition continues to serve as the catalyst for decisions ranging from school organization to classroom instructional practice and fuels the search for new methods to spur the growth of students and teachers alike.

Qualitatively, the results of these combined efforts have evidence in a professional culture of dialogue, inquiry, and collaboration that have become the new routine. Quantitatively, a milestone emerged three years into our work when the school observed consistent and significant improvement in reading and mathematics scores on state (MEA) assessments as discussed in detail in Part IV. A wider five-year view of MEA performance is even more telling; James F. Doughty School not only performs at the top of Maine middle schools of similar size and demographics, but also on par with schools from the wealthiest communities in our state. We are proud to demonstrate that students from lower socioeconomic classes can achieve at high levels, and even more proud that self-selected reading books now ably compete with laptops for carrying space in student backpacks.



## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

The Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) is the State's measure of student progress in achieving the State standards known as the Maine Learning Results (MLR), adopted by the Maine Legislature in 1997. The MEA consists of selected response questions and constructed response test items that are used to compare students against a standard of performance set by the MLR. The result is a scale from X01 to X80 (with "X" indicating the grade level) divided into four equal performance bands: Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards, Partially Meets Standards and Does Not Meet Standards. Scores of X41-X81 are considered "Proficient" for AYP calculations, with a dividing point of X61 between the performance levels Meets Standards and Exceeds Standards. Scores of X40 or lower are not considered proficient, with a dividing point of X41 between the performance levels of Partially Meets Standards and Does Not Meet Standards. While the Maine Department of Education has opted to join other New England States in regional assessment program in lieu of the MEA for 2009-2010 and beyond, all of the data presented below result from the school's participation in MEA testing through 2009. More information is available at <http://www.maine.gov/education/lsalt/index.htm>.

The James F. Doughty School directly has targeted improved student performance on the MEA reading and mathematics assessments within its annual school improvement planning. As the ultimate measure of school performance on multiple levels, the MEA asks students to think and apply standards that are among the most rigorous nationally. This unique, precise focus and a commitment to the district mission of "Academic Excellence for All Students" are major factors in the 5-year achievement gains observed through the school's MEA performance:

- \* For five consecutive years, the performance level of JFDS students at all grade levels has eclipsed state performance levels in both MEA Reading and MEA Mathematics as measured by both Average Scale Score and Percent Proficient.

- \* This upward trend in MEA achievement corresponds with an increase in the school's Economically Disadvantaged population, which has increased from 46% to 67% during the same 5-year period. The expanded notion of literacy and purposeful reading instruction cultivated and developed at JFDS over time yielded significant gains in student reading achievement as measured and reported by the MEA. Consider:

- \*The Average Scale Score in reading among JFDS grade eight students has improved 12 points from 840 to 852.

- \*A dramatic climb has been realized in the percentage of grade eight students now considered Proficient in reading, a 35-point climb from 47% in 2005 to 82% in 2009.

- \*Similar gains are apparent in grade 7 reading, with a 4-year Average Scale Score gain of 8 points and remarkable increase of Proficient readers from 61% to 88%.

- \*Grade 6 reading data has climbed steadily, observing a 3 point gain in Average Scale Score and an increase of Proficient readers from 64% to 78% during students' transition year to JFDS.

Underpinning this rise in achievement are the many professional initiatives fostered at the school over time and discussed from various angles throughout the preceding and ensuing sections of this document. However, perhaps the most telling story behind the ascension of reading proficiency is the willingness of teachers to examine closely and critique units of study that had been created through their extensive investment of time and leadership just three to five years prior. As with instructional practice, new professional learning about curriculum design replaced prior understanding, and the teachers made the difficult decision to overhaul several core units of study guided by the careful blending of local, state, and national critical reading standards.

Mathematics programming, including implementation of the updated core texts in 2008, has benefited similarly from professional discussion, teacher leadership, and a commitment to precise instruction. As a result, student achievement in mathematics has improved significantly over five years as measured by the state assessment:

- \* The Average Scale Score in mathematics among JFDS grade 8 students has improved 13 points from 834-847.

- \* The percentage of grade 8 students deemed Proficient has grown 30 percentage points, reaching 64% in 2009 and eclipsing state levels by 11 points.

- \* While not seeing dramatic four-year increases in Average Scale Score (five and three points respectively) grade 7 and 6 math students have realized significant gains in percent proficient on the MEA. 62% of grade 7 math students (up from 49%) and 69% of grade 6 math students (up from 52%) are now meeting or exceeding state standards.

- \* Remarkably, grade 6 mathematics achievement observed a 13 point increase in percent proficient in 2009 following careful instructional mapping of the updated text series lead by JFDS teachers. The 69% proficiency level compares to the state level of 54% of Maine 6th grade math students.

The story behind the math achievement data is perhaps best told by the final two data points, which indicate that stronger alignment to state standards, thorough identification of the strengths and needs of individual students, and the precise instruction resulting from both of these efforts have resulted in many more students rising to new levels of proficiency.

A final achievement indicator worth noting is the historical low percentage of JFDS 8th grade readers who Do Not Meet Standards, especially when placed in the context of state averages. While the goal is for all children to reach proficient levels and a response is generated when this is not the case, the three-year JFDS total of 18 students (5%) not meeting standards affirms that instructional programming generally and intervention programming specifically very effectively addresses the unique development needs of individual students. Over the same three-year period, over 19% of Maine grade 8 students performed in this tier.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

The use of assessment data to inform instructional and program planning is institutionalized at the James F. Doughty School and within the Bangor School Department. The James F. Doughty School has engaged in continuous improvement planning since the 2003-2004 academic year, and over that time the school has empowered a core planning team known as the School Core Competency (SCC) team to analyze multiple data sources, to establish empirical achievement goals, to prioritize professional development, and to define action steps that will lead to higher student achievement.

Coordinated by the building principal and guided by the district's continuous improvement framework, the SCC team at JFDS uniquely is organized in content area teams, allowing ELA and math teachers to analyze assessment data with critical, sophisticated, and subject-informed eyes. Team members analyze data on multiple levels, comparing the performance of JFDS students to their state and local peers, to their ongoing performance as a cohort, and to students assessed at the same grade level in prior years. The team's content structure also enriches its participation in district-led summer SCC work, during which all school teams gather to reflect on the data and establish district and building priorities for the new year. In these ways, the picture of student achievement develops more clearly and efficiently, as does the necessary instructional and program response that result in formal goal setting and action planning.

The school's sophisticated use of Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) performance data in reading and math has been critical to the school's ascension. A highlight is the study of item analysis data, when teachers and data teams trace individual, group, and school performance to the specific test item(s) and the standards they are designed to measure. Similar to the school's efforts to frame instruction around the higher order

process verbs of Bloom's Taxonomy, teachers interpret MEA performance data through the process verbs of individual MEA questions, identifying trends and exploring performance on a finer level. In retrospect, this approach has promoted a deeper understanding of standards and of the curricular and instructional experiences required to achieve new levels of student performance.

### **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

Communication with parents to support student success has become a valued routine at the James F. Doughty School and within the Bangor School Department. The school offers and encourages whole school, small group, and individual meetings with parents to understand and assist the achievement of their children. Parents and students access daily postings of grades and assignments through our online portal, and portal use is supported with training sessions hosted at the school. Report cards are available both in hard copy and online, and the mailing of individual state assessment reports includes a cover letter developed by the school to explain the assessment and to interpret performance. Similarly, semiannual reports of each student's reading comprehension assessment (the Scholastic Reading Inventory in place since 2005) are mailed to parents along with a letter meant to support their understanding of performance. School professionals, psychologists, social workers, and other specialists are available to assist parents and students in their understanding of achievement and in formulating individualized plans for improvement. Like all school efforts, communication with parents is frequent, ongoing, and designed to build a shared understanding of how to improve student achievement.

As described in (2) above, the JFDS SCC team plays the foundational role in the analysis, interpretation, and communication of student performance and assessment data. A strength of the process both on the building and district levels is the clear articulation of the annual improvement plan and the extensive reliance upon and communication of student data. The work of the school's SCC team will continue to be communicated to the staff, students, parents, and community in the following ways:

- \* Publishing the district's NCLB report card, disaggregated by school, on the district web site and in the district's semiannual newsletter *The Communiqué* that is mailed to all Bangor addresses.
- \* Presenting the school's annual improvement plan during a televised Bangor School Committee meeting, including specific discussion of student achievement levels and ensuing targets for improvement.
- \* Providing a mid year report to the school staff and to the School Committee at a televised meeting, including reference to mid-year achievement data.
- \* Publishing a final report outlining the school's success relative to the established improvement goals, including important quantitative and qualitative data and possible action steps for the next academic year. A full oral report is delivered to the School Committee at a televised meeting, including a detailed review of goals, action steps, and outcomes.
- \* Informing and consulting with the district's Title I Parent Advisory Group regarding the strengths and needs of the students as revealed through data analysis and the appropriate school program response to build on those strengths and address those needs.

### **4. Sharing Success:**

Spawned by successful internal efforts to provide peer-to-peer professional development, several James F. Doughty School faculty members have become professional development resources on the district level. The reading team has been called upon to design and host district professional development sessions for both elementary and middle level educators on a range of literacy topics, including the instruction of reading strategies in the content area, visualization as a comprehension strategy, and the reading of online texts. A 2008 district in-service day included multiple, successive, resource-laden, engaging sessions on improving literacy for the benefit of over 100 fellow district teachers. In recent years, JFDS math instructors have

overseen the development of the district's benchmark assessments and have led district teachers in the implementation planning for the updated mathematics textbook series. JFDS science teachers are viewed as district leaders in the provision of hands-on research opportunities for their students, and their work has contributed meaningfully to the practice of other regional science educators through the Citizen Scientist Initiative. The media center specialist sparked the impetus leading to the district adoption of the Big 6 informational literacy model, and JFD staff development opened the avenue for use of Moodle in other district schools. Routinely, our faculty who enroll in graduate classes at the local university are asked to identify in conversations with other professionals the ingredients contributing to our achievement results. And, organizationally, representatives from the high school and the other middle school in the district have dialogued with JFD leaders regarding the increased allocation of time daily for math and for reading instruction. In summary, the JFDS staff draws great energy from its critical role in supporting the professional development of other educators and in sharing what has worked for JFDS in the quest for improved achievement levels.

Should JFDS be awarded Blue Ribbon School status, the school would willingly and eagerly share its formula for consistent, teacher-driven, and instruction-focused school improvement with regional schools. Such a step would be a logical extension of its belief in a community of learners collaborating to improve instructional practice and student outcomes while reflecting on "what works."

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

Through the ongoing development and creative delivery of a far-reaching and well-rounded curriculum, JFDS teachers have embraced the challenge of helping students achieve at the exceptionally high levels outlined in Maine's rigorous standards. All areas of the curriculum are aligned to these standards, and, daily, students are engaged in study across content areas which aims to develop life long learning habits, skills, and strategies that will have them well prepared for leading successful 21st century lives. Numerous school and district wide initiatives, such as literacy instruction in all content areas, adoption of the Big 6 approach to information skills, and inquiry based study, permeate instruction in all curricular areas. Multiple opportunities for accelerated learning are offered, and these opportunities are open to all students who elect to take part.

Our language arts curriculum is broad, as state standards demand, and thoughtfully has been reviewed to eliminate unnecessary repetition and to allow for purposeful integration of all aspects of communication. See the description of our English curriculum in Part V, item 2b for more on this core curriculum area.

Three years of science curriculum have our students studying earth, life, and physical sciences. In addition, a chemical health curriculum is delivered in part of each of these three years. See the description of the "Additional Curriculum Area" for a more complete look at our science curriculum.

In order to meet our students' needs in the study of mathematics, five courses of math study are offered, extending through Algebra I and geometry. JFDS teachers routinely review, align, and map the curriculum to state standards, ensuring that students are continually and progressively exposed to math skills and concepts. Within each math course, students explore the concepts of data analysis, number sense, probability, algebraic functions and geometry. Students, in consultation with their parents and teachers, are able to elect their courses of study in mathematics regardless of their grade level. A full hour of math instruction is provided daily, with explicit instruction of math vocabulary supporting content area literacy efforts on the school level integrated regardless of the course or grade level. Our district has developed a set of benchmark assessments administered in grades 3,5, and 7 to inform individualized instruction.

The social studies curriculum prompts students to consider how government, economics, and geography influence the development, organization, and operation of a culture. Sixth graders study a variety of civilizations and cultures to understand how civilizations form, operate, and decline. Seventh and eighth graders spend two years studying America's history and the responsibilities of U.S. citizenship. Daily instruction using both primary and secondary sources reflects the ongoing use of a variety of reading strategies to enhance student comprehension and to facilitate the higher order manipulation of content.

A visual and performing arts curriculum delivered over three years of sequential, inquiry-driven instruction in art and music continually exposes students to the richness of fine arts, experiences that may be lacking for many of our under-resourced learners. Students are expected to think critically about works of art and musical compositions, to draw conclusions about their meaning and origin, and to make connections between various styles and forms. The curriculum, organized under an annual district-wide fine arts theme, provides opportunities for hands-on, technical skill development over the students' three years through creation and critique of their own pieces of art and music. Students historically have used these collective curriculum experiences to launch into the many school and district-sponsored co-curricular performance opportunities, ranging from art clubs to state music and choral festivals.

JFDS students have the opportunity to study two foreign languages, beginning with quarter-long exploratory classes in Spanish and French at grades six and seven, respectively. As eighth graders, our students may elect

to study a year-long foreign language course which follows the established high school curriculum for either French I or Spanish I. In this way, students face a common high performance standard in their chosen language, easing the transition to high school instruction.

Our three-year physical education curriculum focuses on personal fitness and the development of healthy, active lifestyles. Students regularly test their strength, flexibility, and endurance, analyze these data, and set individual goals guided by national fitness standards. In addition to personal fitness, our PE students learn about and participate in team and cooperative games and engage in thematic physical activities such as the school-wide Survivor Challenge and the Winter Olympics unit.

## **2b. (Secondary Schools) English:**

(This question is for secondary schools only)

Integrated, standards-based reading and writing instruction equips students with the skills, strategies, and metacognitive abilities to accomplish a variety of communication tasks. The JFDS English Language Arts curriculum develops life-long readers, writers, listeners, speakers, and thinkers comfortable and confident in navigating 21st century texts. In all three grades, ELA students read a variety of texts, including poetry, drama, various sub-genres of fiction, and an array of informational texts including essays, biographies, informational trade books, and textbooks. An integrated instructional approach provides numerous opportunities to read and write with and for a variety of purposes, as well as to utilize technology to gather and communicate information.

Explicit teaching of strategies anchors reading instruction, and students of all abilities are challenged to think at the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy to mature their metacognitive skills. Whole group, small group, and one-on-one discussions of reading and writing skills and strategies are daily occurrences across content areas. Of particular curricular influence, the school's media center specialist plays a prominent role in the acquisition of literacy and research skills among students and in the integration of unit content and instructional planning for teachers.

A variety of informal classroom assessments coupled with summative district assessments measure and monitor student mastery of the rigorous curriculum standards. Student performance on the state level standards based assessment (MEA), examined by teams of teachers each year, provides information to guide instruction and intervention planning for those students reading below grade level.

Unique to Bangor for over 20 years, the Student Instructional Plan (SIP) program draws data from local, state, and national assessments to individualize an intervention response for students reading below grade level. The SIP identifies the relative areas of weakness for each reader, and classroom teachers identify instructional strategies targeting those weaknesses. Reviews at mid-year and year-end require further analysis of student progress and the impact of instruction on closing grade-level achievement gaps.

One might point to the increase in Media Center circulation, the rise in assessment scores, and the historically low number of JFDS students not meeting standards (15 total students out of 382 over three years) as empirical indicators of the success of these combined curriculum efforts in reading. Qualitatively, success also is characterized by the response of a JFDS ELA teacher who was asked to reflect on the school's growth: "Over the last several years we have become a community of readers. Because kids are enjoying reading, they see themselves as capable readers. When I talk reading strategies in class, kids are willing and able to contribute to the process."

### **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Inquiry based instruction in earth, life, and physical sciences over three years requires students to investigate through application of the scientific method in hands-on laboratory work the universal questions posed by science. The school has three science lab spaces in close proximity to traditional classrooms. Through hands-on conducting of experiments, and logging and analyzing results, students gain an understanding of the real life applications of the scientific concepts studied. Additionally, grade 8 students enroll in a quarter-long applied science course dedicated to debunking myths of science and to assisting students' further development of the habits of the scientific mind.

Science instruction incorporates many of the initiatives identified by the school and through research as important in improving student achievement and in sharpening the impact of science exploration. Literacy skills acquisition and application are woven into the science curriculum, ranging from direct vocabulary instruction to the application of information seeking skills. Technology is integrated in our sciences classes, with students using organizing software (Inspiration) and visualizing software (Comic Life) to better understand content and concepts. Using Moodle, a web-based course management program, teachers support students with tutorials, supplemental materials, and engage them in live and active discussion forums related to current topics of study. Students in their forum participation are expected to display the thinking represented by the scientific method.

Our science teachers deliver a curriculum aligned to state standards and one that seeks to spark an interest in science, nurturing the thinking and inquiry skills required of 21st century learners. Our goal is to equip students to be informed decision makers and consumers in matters related to science. All of our seventh and eighth grade science teachers have graduate study in science. Because some of our teachers are scientists themselves, they find openings in the curriculum to involve students in conducting research of interest and value to our local community. Presently, JFDS students and teachers at grades 7 and 8 are conducting invasive crab research to document the arrival of *Hemigrapsus sanguineus*, the Asian Shore Crab, at Maine's Moose Point State Park. The results of student and teacher research collaborations have been presented at professional forums such as the National Science Teachers Association Conference, the National Shellfish Association Conference, and the Maine Association of Middle Level Educators conference.

The JFDS science program subscribes to the belief that students who build a strong, experiential foundation open the door to career opportunities in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. The Invention Convention, a culminating event of three years of scientific study, asks students to identify a real-world problem, collect and analyze data, create a solution, and present their work to a panel of judges. In this hands-on experience, students put their problem solving skills and scientific knowledge to the test. Impressively, for the last seven years, JFDS students have performed with distinction, earning recognition at the state level competition. Furthermore, annually, our science teachers host an after school science social where scientists from various fields meet students during an informal teacher, student, scientist mingle, sharing their autobiographical paths that led them to their science field and then through a hands on activity offer glimpses to students of what they as scientists do. The activity traditionally draws a cross section of students and strengthens the connection from classroom learning to "real world" science. Additionally, the excitement around scientific inquiry generated by our science teachers has given birth to an after school club that has nearly 15% of our students voluntarily extending their school day to participate in additional scientific study.

### **4. Instructional Methods:**

Foundational to the instructional program are the practices of examining achievement data, adjusting instruction to respond to data targets, and maintaining expectations for achievement from all learners regardless of where they experience instruction. Teachers use a variety of measures, including pre and post

data, district assessments, state and national assessments, and daily observations based on classroom performance, to build a profile of the student and to design appropriate instructional responses. The ongoing practice of diagnosing learning needs and prescribing an instructional response supports our commitment to continuous improvement. Through whole class instruction, regrouping within the classroom, small group instruction or, in some instances, one to one instruction, students are appropriately engaged and challenged.

In Bangor, differentiation begins with curriculum design with the best example found in the development and implementation of district-wide common units in several content areas. These units are developed by groups of teachers with a wide range of teaching assignments, from special education to accelerated courses in their discipline. Using a backward planning model informed by professional study, a key standards-based concept is identified and an essential question is developed. All students pursue this essential question through the reading of a common text. The teaching emphasis is on developing within each student the necessary content and process understandings to complete the unit assessment, regardless of their skill level. Teachers differentiate through multimodal presentation and assessment with the wide acceptance that multiple pathways and student products are valid for assessing their learning.

Using ELA common units as a lens, teachers recognize that some readers will need more support than others in text comprehension and will employ a variety of instructional methods. Our most capable readers are expected to select and apply comprehension strategies independently, while near grade level or just below grade level readers, such as students typically identified as recipients of Title 1 services, may participate in a shared reading experience where peers work together to read strategically and build an understanding of the text. Paired reading is a likely instructional option for our ELA students, and oral reading may be the method of delivery for special education students whose decoding skills fall several years below grade level but who still can demonstrate higher order thinking when that limitation has been mitigated. Background information and supplemental texts provided to students in the course of study are also varied dependent upon student needs. These kinds of modifications help us to prepare all students to approach the common assessment and higher levels of thinking it requires. As such, whether a student experiences the common unit in the resource room or through accelerated ELA, the larger concept understanding is common while resources to support and guide that understanding are matched in a way that not only recognizes but also stretches student abilities.

## **5. Professional Development:**

Recognizing the correlation between high-quality professional development and student achievement, ongoing staff training is a cornerstone in our continuous school improvement efforts. Experience tells us that teachers learning from one another, sharing in the decision-making process, and engaging in practical tasks intended to inform both instruction and assessment combine as the most effective form of professional development. Like good instruction, professional development must target the specific needs of the school. With that in mind, one milestone experience was our summer staff reading of Ruby Payne's important work, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. The discussions spawned from that effort continue to guide our understanding, engagement, and support of the many under-resourced students we educate.

Professional development in literacy instruction is an ongoing endeavor with the clear expectation that all teachers must become teachers of reading. Capitalizing on internal expertise, professional development efforts utilize teachers with literacy backgrounds to present workshops during the school day to their colleagues, and participants are granted release time to attend. Past workshops have focused on teaching and modeling before, during, and after reading strategies across texts. Through training videos and discussion of best practice research, teachers leave with the tools to implement new instructional strategies.

This training has extended to other disciplines as well, with sessions accounting for the unique language and methods of organizing information that must be considered when instructing reading strategies in the content areas. Applied to mathematics, teachers now emphasize mathematics vocabulary, understanding text features,



and previewing texts prior to instruction as part of larger district efforts to embed literacy instruction horizontally and vertically within the disciplines. As documented in the five-year analysis of reading and math achievement in Part IV, the staff is encouraged-- but no longer surprised-- by the impact of improved instructional practice on student outcomes and considers these gains empirical affirmation of the school's professional development efforts.

The less formal affirmation of professional growth under this model is the importance of the media center as the hub of professional development. Housing a growing collection of professional reading materials, the media center is the gathering place for teachers to meet, exchange ideas, and work collaboratively. Many afternoons, well after students have left the building, teachers across the content areas huddle around the table planning instruction, watching webinars, reading, seeking technological assistance, and generally engaging in the types of authentic learning we hope to foster in our students. As the concept of literacy and the need for students to develop 21st century skills emerge and expand, so will the school's efforts to keep pace instructionally through teacher-led professional development.

## **6. School Leadership:**

Research on effective schools documents the leadership role of the principal in improving achievement for students. According to Delavigne and Robertson, "leadership can be defined as providing people with a picture of what needs to be done to achieve common objectives and instilling the desire to achieve them chiefly by actions rather than rhetoric."

Our school leadership, while led by the principal, is distributed among formal leaders: assistant principal, four team leaders, who are members of our faculty, and our reading and math instructional teams comprised of teachers. For our school community, our principal conveys a vision where all students are engaged academically, where the daily focus is effective and purposeful teaching, and where the school climate prioritizes an environment conducive to teaching and learning. The unwavering vision instills a powerful sense of purpose to our work, molding and shaping decisions ranging from faculty hiring and the development of the school schedule to the allocation of time and material resources.

Yearly, after achievement data is reviewed by our leadership and representatives from our math and reading faculty, the principal oversees the development of quantitative goals establishing achievement targets intended to stretch students at each grade level based on state assessment measures. Through conversations and discussions between the faculty and the principal, action strategies evolve to support the pursuit of the goals. A timeline for implementing the action strategies and the identification of professionals responsible for implementation is defined. Periodically, during the school year at both formal and informal meetings goal progress is monitored by our principal culminating in the summer with a review and analysis of results by the principal and members of the faculty.

Recognizing that skillful and artful teachers committed to the vision can accelerate student learning, our leadership encourages, nurtures, and expects through formal and informal dialogue with faculty, school based staff development for faculty, and observation and principal's evaluation of faculty that best practices are modeled and that students stretch metacognitively. As a result of leadership's expectations, of our goal setting, of our creation and participation in professional growth opportunities, and of our personal and collective belief in the vision, our faculty are neither reluctant nor intimidated to chase the challenge to accelerate the achievement of all our students. Leadership seeks to empower faculty to take thoughtful risks with their instructional practice. Knowing that our leaders, too, challenge themselves to problem solve creatively and to think outside traditional routines if student learning will be energized, faculty display a positive, confident, can-do attitude as they lead students in pursuit of the vision.

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6 Test: Maine Educational Assessment (MEA)

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measured Progress

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	69	56	62	52	0
% Exceeds	25	19	15	15	0
Number of students tested	130	159	125	118	0
Percent of total students tested	99	99	97	98	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	6	0	4	5	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	0	3	4	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	58	37	55	34	
% Exceeds	11	12	8		
Number of students tested	66	85	64	51	
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	54	29	8	20	
% Exceeds	8	8	0		
Number of students tested	13	24	13	15	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes: Data for 2004-2005 is not applicable because there was no NCLB testing at this grade level. No data available for "%exceeds" under subgroups in 2005-2006 because ME NCLB school reports did not include this data.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6 Test: Maine Educational Assessment (MEA)

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measured Progress

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	78	75	68	64	0
% Exceeds	13	15	7	10	0
Number of students tested	130	159	125	119	0
Percent of total students tested	99	99	97	98	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	0	4	4	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	0	3	3	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	65	63	59	56	
% Exceeds	6	7	3		
Number of students tested	68	85	64	51	
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	53	37	46	27	
% Exceeds	13	4	0		
Number of students tested	15	24	13	15	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Data for 2004-2005 is not applicable because there was no NCLB testing at this grade level. No data available for "%exceeds" under subgroups in 2005-2006 because ME NCLB school reports did not include this data.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7 Test: Maine Educational Assessment (MEA)

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measured Progress

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	62	58	56	49	0
% Exceeds	25	18	24	22	0
Number of students tested	157	132	118	132	0
Percent of total students tested	99	99	100	98	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	0	5	8	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	0	4	6	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	52	45	37	47	
% Exceeds	13	6	13		
Number of students tested	83	71	46	67	
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	43	35	20	8	
% Exceeds	11	6	10		
Number of students tested	19	17	10	20	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Data for 2004-2005 is not applicable because there was no NCLB testing at this grade level. No data available for "% exceeds" under subgroups in 2005-2006 because ME NCLB school reports did not include this data.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7 Test: Maine Educational Assessment (MEA)

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measured Progress

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	88	82	76	61	0
% Exceeds	27	27	26	20	0
Number of students tested	156	132	118	132	0
Percent of total students tested	99	99	100	98	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	0	5	8	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	0	4	6	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	85	73	65	47	
% Exceeds	15	17	11		
Number of students tested	82	71	46	67	
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	63	47	30	8	
% Exceeds	16	12	20		
Number of students tested	19	17	10	20	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Data for 2004-2005 is not applicable because there was no NCLB testing at this grade level. No data available for "% exceeds" under subgroups in 2005-2006 because ME NCLB school reports did not include this data.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 8 Test: Maine Educational Assessment (MEA)

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measured Progress

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	64	60	65	62	34
% Exceeds	22	16	26	23	5
Number of students tested	131	122	123	146	162
Percent of total students tested	100	98	96	95	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	8	13	15
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	0	6	9	9
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	56	51	49	46	50
% Exceeds	11	10	15		
Number of students tested	73	51	47	29	155
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	50	43	38		0
% Exceeds	0	14	15		0
Number of students tested	18	14	13		13
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

There are no percentages given for the subgroup "Socio-Economic Disadvantaged" for the years 2005-2006 and 2004-2005 because ME NCLB school reports did not include this data. Regarding the number of students tested in 2004-2005 in the subgroup "Socio-Economic Disadvantaged" - this was determined through student response to demographics questionnaire. Methodology was changed to F/R lunch for 2006 MEA.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8

Test: Maine Educational Assessment (MEA)

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009

Publisher: Measured Progress

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	82	79	73	71	47
% Exceeds	20	38	30	24	3
Number of students tested	131	122	123	146	163
Percent of total students tested	100	98	96	95	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	8	9	20
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	6	6	12
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	77	74	49	56	50
% Exceeds	8	25	15		
Number of students tested	74	51	47	31	155
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	58	28	38	17	
% Exceeds	11	7	15		
Number of students tested	19	14	13	11	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

**Notes:**

There are no percentages given for the Subgroup "Economically Disadvantaged" for the years 2005-2006 and 2004-2005 because ME NCLB school reports did not include this data. Regarding the number of students tested in 2004-2005 in the subgroup "Economically Disadvantaged" - this was determined through student response to demographics questionnaire. Methodology was changed to F/R lunch for 2006 MEA.